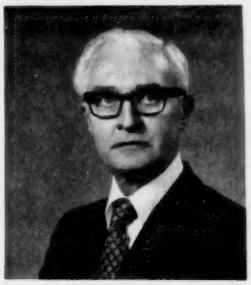
NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE
NEWS

Published for institutions and individuals interested in health sciences communications.

Vol. XXXII, No. 1 | Bethesda, Maryland | January 1977

Robert M. Bird, M.D.

Dr. Robert Montgomery Bird, Director of the Library's Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications, died of a heart attack in Allentown, Pennsylvania on December 31. He had been Director of the Center since December 1974.



NLM Director Dr. Martin M. Cummings said, "Dr. Bird will be missed as a close friend as well as a professional colleague. He was a distinguished physician and an effective and dedicated leader of the research activities at NLM."

Born in Charlottesville, Virginia, Dr. Bird received his M.D. degree from the University of Virginia in 1939, and served in the U.S. Army Medical Corps during World War II, rising to the rank of major.

In 1952, after several years of private practice in New York City, Dr. Bird joined the faculty of the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine.

He remained there for two decades, first as executive officer of the department of medicine and later as professor in the College of Medicine, serving as chief of the Hematology Section from 1965 to 1970. In 1970 he was named Dean of the College of Medicine, the chief academic officer for all educational programs under the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.

Dr. Bird was the author of more than 50 articles published in leading professional journals, and was a member of numerous professional and scientific societies. He received the University of Oklahoma Regents Award for Superior Teaching and served as governor for the American College of Physicians in Oklahoma.

Dr. Bird is survived by a sister, Mrs. William S.D. Woods of Richmond, and two nephews.

Expressions of sympathy in the form of contributions may be made to the Robert Montgomery Bird Society, care of the Dean's Office, University of Oklahoma College of Medicine in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73190.

Corning Named Brookings Fellow

Mary E. Corning, NLM Assistant Director for International Programs, has been appointed a Federal Executive Fellow by the Brookings Institution. The six-month fellowship begins in January 1977 and will enable Miss Corning to undertake a research study on international cooperation in biomedicine.

The Brookings Institution, located in Washington, D.C. is a private nonprofit organization devoted to research, education, and publication in matters of government, foreign policy, and economics.

New Information Service for Toxicology

Headlines in our daily press attest that one facet of modern life of great concern to the average citizen is the possible deleterious effects on his health of the many industrial chemicals, food additives, pesticides, drugs, and other substances to which he is frequently ex-

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Martin M. Cummings, M.D. Director, NLM

Robert B. Mehnert, Chief, Office of Inquiries and Publications Management.
Roger L. Gilkeson Editor (301)496-6308
Daniel L. Carangi Graphics

8600 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, Maryland 20014

posed. To learn more about these effects, government and industry scientists are engaged in long-term toxicology testing to evaluate the hazard or safety of substances used by man.

With this growing reliance on long-term toxicology research has come a need for scientists to know what toxicological testing is going on in laboratories other than their own. If they are to avoid needless duplication of research, they must know about current testing in other companies, in other agencies, in the universities, indeed, in other countries.

Recognizing this need and foreseeing that it could grow only more acute, the National Library of Medicine began publishing in June 1976 an experimental monthly current awareness bulletin called *Toxicology Testing in Progress* (TOX-TIPS). TOX-TIPS is sponsored jointly by the Library and the Toxicology Information Subcommittee of the DHEW Committee to Coordinate Toxicology and Related Programs. TOX-TIPS has strong support from industry and trade associations which have voluntarily submitted reports of on-going research projects.

By the end of 1976, TOX-TIPS had made public information on the existence of nearly 100 on-going or planned toxicology testing projects involving more than 100 substances. The project announcements carry information on chemical structure, how the substance is administered, dosage, species and strain of test animals, duration of the test, number of animals used, control arrangements, and the like. A cumulative index by compound, investigator, and supporting and performing organization is included in each issue of TOX-TIPS.

Although the main function of TOX-TIPS is to be an alerting service, it may in fact provide the only published notice for many toxicology projects. For a variety of reasons, such as the absence of any observable effect, results may never be published. Knowledge that such a project was undertaken, however, could be critical to another toxicologist interested in the same or a structurally similar substance.

The Library plans to issue several more experimental issues before converting the publication to a subscription item available from the National Technical Information Service. For sample issues or further information, write to Dr. Melvin Josephs, Chief, Technical Files Implementation Branch, Specialized Information Services, NLM.

Learning to Use MEDLINE by Computer

Since 1971, when NLM inaugurated MEDLINE, there has been a tremendous growth in the use of the Library's on-line retrieval services—growth which has been paralleled by an increase in the training provided by NLM for network users. Although using MEDLINE requires no special background in computers, those who search the data bases do need to be acquainted with the NLM indexing procedures, the vocabulary used for retrieving references, and the techniques for accessing the system, combining search items, and so forth.

For several years, the Library has been teaching the use of MEDLINE through a variety of training courses, workshops, and demonstrations. A new approach to such teaching has been the development of *MEDLEARN*, a program that uses a computer to teach students how to search NLM's on-line data bases. *MEDLEARN* is an example of the instructional technique known as CAI (computer-assisted instruction). CAI eliminates the geographic restrictions of training classes by providing access to the same instructional program from remote locations by means of computer terminals. Although somewhat expensive to create, CAI courses may be given at modest costs and are easy to update

or modify. Most important, however, a CAI program allows the student to experience a genuine interaction with the computer. This makes the transition from instruction to on-line searching much easier and smoother.

MEDLEARN was developed by the National Library of Medicine in cooperation with the Office of Computer Assisted Education and Services of the George Washington University. Beginning on November 1, 1976, *MEDLEARN* was made available to all 500 institutions that subscribe to MEDLINE. Other organizations may apply for access by contacting NLM's MEDLARS Management Section.

MEDLEARN is a modularized instructional program, that is, it is written in chapters, each of which deals with a specific aspect of searching MEDLINE. Students who have had little or no experience with on-line searching are guided through a logical sequence of topics, while more experienced students may choose their own path through the material. This is made possible by a complex and sophisticated computer program that enables each *MEDLEARN* user to bypass or to review instructional sequences at his own discretion. Thus, each student may determine the length of time to be devoted to an instructional session, and simply resume at some future time at precisely that point in the program at which the previous session terminated.

MEDLEARN is a highly interactive instructional program: student and "teacher" are constantly sending messages to each other. The student's level of comprehension is assessed through frequent questions and quizzes. The computer responds to each of the student's answers, with clarification and reinforcement for a correct response, or a restatement of the lesson and further queries for an incorrect response.

The average total time of instruction is four hours. At the current lowest rate of $8 an hour for time connected to the NLM computer, the cost for each student is about $32.

"Track A" of *MEDLEARN* is currently available for general use, and is designed to teach the novice how to perform simple searches of MEDLINE. Additional tracks will address more sophisticated search techniques and other NLM data bases.

MEDLEARN is available exclusively from the National Library of Medicine computer in Bethesda, Maryland, Monday through Friday. It may be used prior to 9 a.m., from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and after 6 p.m. Hours of use on Saturdays are not restricted; however, availability is not guaranteed when MEDLINE is not operating.

Index Medicus Subscriptions Change to Calendar Year Basis

The Government Printing Office is converting the subscription period for *Index Medicus* to a calendar year. The new policy should help speed up the processing of orders and assure that each subscriber receives a complete volume of issues.

Previously, IM subscriptions were entered for 12 months beginning with the next monthly issue after the date the order was processed (back issues were not furnished).

In order to effect this change, notices have been sent out to extend *current* subscriptions through 1977, with the cost pro-rated depending on the number of 1977 issues covered under the current subscription. For example, a U.S. customer whose subscription expires with the February 1977 issue would pay for ten issues ($144.20) to extend his subscription through December 1977. If a customer has already renewed his subscription for a period extending into 1978, a refund will be issued for the 1978 issues.

New subscribers in 1977 will automatically be sent all issues for 1977 beginning with January 1977 (Parts I and II), even though the orders are being processed after the regular mailing of those issues.

The 1977 subscription rate is the same as that for 1976: $173.05 ($216.35 foreign).

Note: Your *Index Medicus* mailing label contains coded information, including the number of issues due on your subscription (*News*, November 1976), and should be cited in full in any correspondence with the Government Printing Office. Note also that the new calendar-year subscription policy applies only to the monthly *Index Medicus*.

NLM Serial Gap List

The following journal issues are this month's continuation to the list of gaps in the Library's collection. If you can supply any of these items, please address them to:

National Library of Medicine
TSD-GAPS
8600 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20014

Acta Chirurgiae Orthopaedicae et Traumatologiae Cechoslovaca 30:6, 1963; 41:4, 1971
American Lung Assocation Bulletin 59:2,3,4, 1973; 60:7,8, 1974
Bollettino Farmaceutico 112:5, 1973
Bulletin of the History of Medicine 50:1, 1976
Chemical Abstracts 81:10, 1974
Chirurgische Praxis 17, 1973
Early Child Development and Care 1:1, 1972
Entretiens De Bichat-Odonto-Stomatologie 1974
From the State Capitals; Public Health Trends 7, 1975
From the State Capitals; Water 0 Air Pollution Abatement Developments 2, 1968; 15, 1969; 4-5, 1970; 10, 1970; 8-10, 1971; 14, 1971; 1-2, 1972; 7-8, 1972; 12, 1972; 1-6, 1973; 2, 1975; 5, 1975; 9, 1975
Hawaii Medical Journal 35:1-3, 1976
Proceedings of the International Congress on Event Related Slow Potentials of the Brain 1st and 2nd *Psychologie Medicale* 5, 1973; 6, 1974
Relevant Health Services Activities Report; Department of Public Health, Alabama 1972
Resumenes. Series: Medicina Veterinaria 1, 1970; 2, 1971, 3:1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8, 1972
Tandtknikeren 39:2,3,4, 1973; 40:2,3,4, 1974
Tar Heel Nurse 37:3,4,8, 1975

Publication Notes

Medical Subject Headings, 1977

Part II of the January 1977 issue of *Index Medicus,* titled *Medical Subject Headings,* is available as a separate item from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Price: $8.20 ($10.05 foreign). Stock Number 017-052-71095-8.

Change in Author Listings

In the past, citations in the Author Section of *Index Medicus* listed a maximum of three authors. Beginning with the January issue, *all* authors will be cited. The change also applies to *Abridged Index Medicus* and the *Monthly Bibliography of Medical Reviews,* and will be applied to other selected NLM bibliographies in the future.